



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on the Current Situation in Georgia**

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
September 14, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We too have observed the situation in Georgia remaining tense after several firefights last week that resulted in loss of life and an escalation in rhetoric.

We commend the OSCE monitors' rapid investigation of the incidents, which helped to prevent further bloodshed. We all deplore loss of life. Both sides need to exercise restraint and refrain from acts that can escalate tensions and lead to violence.

The United States reaffirms its support for implementation of Georgia's peace plan as endorsed by the OSCE last December. We reiterate our call for further concrete steps to move parties toward peace, as outlined in our last intervention and our Food for Thought paper circulated in July. These include: increasing the number of OSCE monitors in the South Ossetia region and expanding their mandate; establishing a JPKF/OSCE checkpoint at Didi Gupta; and, arranging joint permanent monitoring of the Roki Tunnel to include Georgia, Russia, and the OSCE.

The recent outbursts of violence demonstrate the need to implement these measures as soon as possible. We want to create conditions that help prevent such incidents in the future.

The United States has welcomed the Georgian Government's adoption of unilateral demilitarization measures in its South Ossetia region. We urge our OSCE partners to strengthen their calls on the South Ossetian separatist regime to reciprocate and implement demilitarization measures recommended by OSCE Ambassadors in March, and reiterated by them during a visit to Tskhinvali on September 12<sup>th</sup>. In meetings with separatist authorities during this visit, the American Ambassador in Georgia and his European colleagues repeated our strongest condemnations of the attacks on helicopters as both dangerously provocative and criminal.

The United States expresses disappointment at the lack of progress in the JCC. We hope that all sides will take advantage of the upcoming JCC meeting to move forward on a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.